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USAID Bi-weekly Newsletter

Regional

Central Asia's Youth Learn Leadership, Democracy, and Business Principles at USAID-supported Summer Camps

For a second time, the USAID-funded IFES project in the Kyrgyz Republic conducted the International Democracy Summer Camp for the youth from Central Asian countries. Under the slogan "I, We, and the World," the camp led its participants from every region from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, through discussions on the issues of individual, society, and the world. Meanwhile the USAID-supported Junior Achievement invited Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen students to the Regional Youth Economic Summer Camp in Tajikistan. The students visited joint ventures operating in the area and competed with each other in setting up businesses at camp.



Several USAID programs arranged summer camps for youth to further their education in the areas of leadership, business, and civic responsibilities.
Photo: PEAKS

Turkmen youth also had an opportunity to attend the Youth Leadership Camp, organized in part by USAID's Participation, Education, and Knowledge Strengthening (PEAKS) program in Ashgabat. While the students participated in trainings on subjects such youth leadership, establishing youth clubs, and business, provided by USAID partner, Junior Achievement, their teachers discussed with trainers from Uzbekistan such topics as involving youth in curriculum development, community and school decision making, and utilizing new teaching methodologies in secondary schools.

Kazakhstan

USAID's Court Recording Pilot Project Receives Positive Publicity

USAID's Kazakhstan Judicial Assistance Project (KJAP), implemented by Chemonics International, recently received excellent press coverage on a prime-time TV interview show "Face to Face." The program's feature guest, the Chairman of the Criminal Collegium of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan, referred to the USAID pilot as one of the tools in the struggle against corruption in the judicial system. Prior to that broadcast, the USAID pilot was also featured on the weekly TV program "No Third Option," which devoted almost an entire show to the pilot.



Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Kazakhstan K. Mami at the demonstration at the pilot at Almaty's Bostandyk District Court.
Photo: KJAP

During a 12-month pilot at the Bostandyk District Court in Almaty, USAID's project is testing a high-tech video-recording system that thoroughly and accurately captures all aspects of a court case and provides a verbatim record. Through this pilot, USAID is introducing the novel concept of video court recording into Kazakhstan's judicial procedure to increase its transparency and accountability.



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This positive press coverage exposed citizens across the country to the reform possibilities and to the many ways in which USAID is supporting judicial reform in Kazakhstan.

USAID Helps Improve Judicial Training In Kazakhstan

To support the introduction of continuous education for judges, USAID's Kazakhstan Judicial Assistance Project (KJAP) has recently launched a training program for newly appointed judicial training coordinators. Each training coordinator is responsible for organizing training of judges in their respective oblast, the cities of Almaty or Astana, or for military courts. Training coordinator positions were created by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in the spring of 2006, however, no training was offered to the appointees about their new duties. KJAP's training program will provide judges across Kazakhstan with the ability to determine, and then deliver, much-needed training to their colleagues. From August 16-18, KJAP's training was delivered to the first group of 17 judges, who had recently become regional Training Coordinators.



Seventeen Kazakhstani judges took part in the USAID-supported training to become regional training coordinators.

Photo: KJAP

Kyrgyzstan

USAID Helps Change Investment Laws to Improve Investments Conditions in Kyrgyzstan

New amendments to the Investment Law, developed with USAID assistance, took effect on August 8, 2006. USAID's Trade Facilitation Project, implemented by Pragma, had provided comments on some proposed changes to the amendments to increase the investment attractiveness of the country and better protect investors' rights. The new amendments provide that, if changes or additions are introduced into Kyrgyz investment, tax, or customs legislation within ten years after an investment, the investors shall have the right to choose whether to function under the new law or under the previously effective legislation. According to investors, this is a step forward from the previous Investment Law in which the right of investors to choose conditions most favorable for them did not include tax and customs legislation.

Kyrgyz President Signs Amendments to the Agricultural Land Management Law, developed with USAID Support

On July 25, a set of amendments to the Law on Agricultural Land Management were signed into law by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and will lift some of the land ownership restrictions and help improve conditions for land market development in Kyrgyzstan. Several USAID projects, including the Commercial Law Project, Kyrgyzstan Land Reform Project, Legal Assistance to Rural Citizens Project, and Central Asian Local Government Initiative, have assisted in drafting the laws since 2003. The changes will expand rights related to the exchange, sale, gifting, and inheritance of land plots. To ensure further reform of land legislation, a working group was set up with the participation of experts of the USAID Land Reform and Market Development Project to develop a new set of amendments to land laws.



Head of the Land Commission of the Parliament and Head of the Agrarian Committee of the Parliament discuss the amendments to the Agricultural Land Management Law.

Photo: USAID



USAID Fosters the Exchange of Best Practices among Kyrgyz Local Governments

In September, USAID's Local Government Initiative project, implemented by the Urban Institute, summarized the results of a competition that facilitated an exchange of ideas and practices among Kyrgyz local governments. Mayors and Kenesh (local government) chairpersons of all 25 cities, representatives of the Presidential Administration, the National Agency for Local Self Government, the Association of Cities of the Kyrgyz Republic, donors, NGOs, and the media attended a conference that announced the winners of the Local Government Initiative's Best Local Practices Competition. A total of 29 applications from 19 cities participated in the competition. The winner of the competition was the city of Kara-Balta and its practices of improving information exchange between local government and the population. The Tokmok City Administration received the second-place award for ensuring consistent feedback between the local government head and the community, and the city of Karakol was awarded the third place for cooperation with an NGO in identifying vacant municipal land.



USAID's project works with local governments across Kyrgyzstan to improve services provided to the citizens.

Photo: Local Government Initiative project

Tajikistan

USAID Prepares Teacher Trainers for the Fast Track

From August 21-28, USAID's Participation, Education, and Knowledge Strengthening (PEAKS) program provided training to instructors from In-Service Teacher Training Institutes to prepare them to deliver training on interactive teaching and learning methodologies. These courses are especially timely since Tajikistan recently received \$18.4 million from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI), and has committed to train nearly 3,000 teachers by the summer of 2008. FTI is a global partnership between donor and developing countries to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. Since the institutes have not updated their training programs for many years, these ready-made training programs will ensure the best possible outcomes of the FTI investment. The training modules and digital training materials for primary and secondary teachers and school directors were developed in Uzbekistan in 2005 by teachers and teacher trainers as part of the PEAKS program. The modules focus on the pedagogical theories underlying learner-centered education as well as practical exercises on how to integrate new methods into their everyday lessons. The demand created for skilled teacher trainers by the arrival of FTI funds in the region has resulted in greater sharing of skills between the countries: training was conducted by Uzbekistan-based Master Trainers whose skills are being applied in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to build capacity in the Institutes.



Kulyab Oblast In-Service Institute staff learns how interactive teaching methodologies can stimulate learning.

Photo: Mavjuda Nabieva, USAID

Turkmenistan

USAID Strengthens Training Capacity of the Turkmenistan's National TB Program

As a result of the recent training seminars by a USAID program, each velayat (region) of Turkmenistan now has a team of trainers that can conduct DOTS trainings in accordance with the Ministry of Health and local governments' plans on nationwide DOTS implementation. The Ministry of Health and Medical



Industry of Turkmenistan currently plans to introduce the WHO recommended DOTS strategy throughout the country by 2009, and a cadre of well-prepared trainers is key to this effort.

The seminars were delivered by USAID's partner Project HOPE, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health's TB Prevention Center and the Turkmen State Medical Institute. Participants included the TB faculty of the Turkmen State Medical Institute, TB doctors, lab specialists, and key specialists from the Ministry of Health's TB Prevention Center. Additionally, USAID program donated needed equipment to the State Medical Institute.



TB specialists from all over Turkmenistan worked on expanding their training skills at USAID-supported seminars .

Photo: Project Hope

Uzbekistan

USAID-Supported Drug Use Prevention Manual Will Reach Teachers in Every Urban and Rural School in Uzbekistan

During the academic year 2006-2007, the Ministry of Public Education will distribute countrywide 20,000 copies of the Drug Use Prevention Manual for Teachers of Secondary Schools, developed with support from the USAID-funded Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP). It is the first book of its kind in the country. The manual will be used by secondary school teachers across the country to prevent initiation of drug use among Uzbekistan's youth.

Work on the development of the manual began in 2004, when the USAID-supported program signed a cooperative agreement with the Ministries of Public Education and Higher and Secondary Special Education of Uzbekistan and the Ibn Sino International Foundation. DDRP participated in the preparation of the text, piloted the manual in several schools, and was responsible for its publishing. The USAID-funded program will also support further teacher trainings to assist the introduction of the new manual in schools. DDRP is implemented in part by the Population Services International.



DDRP specialists actively participated in the development of the Drug Prevention Manual for Teachers of Secondary Schools .

Photo: PSI